Today begins the retrial of former Madison, AL police officer, Eric Parker, who was captured on video earlier this year beating Indian grandfather, Sureshbhai Patel, to the point of partial paralysis. A deadlocked jury of ten white men and two Black women, who split right along race and gender lines, failed to convict Parker last month during the first federal trial on a civil rights charge brought against him by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Last month's trial focused on whether the force used by Parker was unreasonable and whether Parker's actions were willful. Both elements are required for a guilty verdict under the federal statute. However, during the trial, the defense attorney asked such questions of Sureshbhai Patel's son Chirag Patel as: "Do you understand it is a federal crime for your father to not have his green card in his possession at all times?" While this makes it seem that Patel's immigration status and ability to speak English justify unreasonable use of force by Parker, it is in fact mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act that police departments that receive federal funds take steps to ensure language access for limited English proficient (LEP) residents.

It is our hope that today's retrial is heard before a jury that truly represents the population of Madison, AL where one in ten residents speaks a language other than English at home. We join National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO) member and Huntsville, AL community-based organization, AshaKiran, in demanding justice for Sureshbhai Patel.